



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Contact: Scott Starr
(517) 373-7708
Amy Rittenhouse
(517) 373-8931

Gilbert-Acciaivatti spill-protection measures signed into law

LANSING – A person responsible for spilling harmful materials into surface or groundwater will be required to immediately report the spill to local authorities under legislation signed into law today by the governor.

Senate Bill 977, sponsored by Sen. Jud Gilbert, and House Bill 5586, sponsored by Rep. Dan Acciaivatti, mandate that local 911 dispatchers be the first party notified in the event of a chemical spill. Dispatchers will then follow a plan developed by the county emergency management coordinator to get the information to water plants and other local agencies in a prompt manner.

“It’s a great day for residents along the St. Clair River,” said Gilbert, R-Algonac. “Protecting them from harmful chemicals is of utmost importance and this new law will do wonders to increase their safety. It also helps local officials who must make crucial safety decisions, sometimes in a matter of seconds. There is no time to waste when dealing with a chemical spill.”

The legislation also requires the responsible party to submit a written explanation to the state Department of Environmental Quality and local health departments affected by the spill. This report will contain information such as the cause of the spill, what types of materials were released, quantities, response measures taken, and what steps are being taken to prevent another spill.

“I commend the governor for her support of this legislation,” said Acciaivatti, R-Chesterfield Township. “These new requirements will help protect our residents until a real-time water monitoring system can be put in place.”

In addition to other possible financial and criminal penalties in existing law, new civil penalties may be levied under the new legislation. The penalties will include up to \$2,500 for failure to report a spill, and up to \$500 for failing to submit a written report of the spill to any affected local health departments.

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